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And They Were There-Reports of Meetings

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And They Were There

Reports of Meetings

Column Editors: **Sever Bordeianu** (U. of New Mexico) <sbordeia@unm.edu> and **Julia Gelfand** (UC, Irvine)



*ATG encourages reports on meetings. Please contact **Sever Bordeianu** if you are interested in reporting on a meeting or in suggesting a meeting for review by ATG! — KS*

The 1995 Charleston Conference, November 2-4, 1995, Charleston, S.C.

Report by **Jack G. Montgomery**
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*Editor's note: Jack wrote this report many months ago. I apologize for my tardiness in running the report and remind you that ATG, February 1996 (v.8#1) ran both **Michael Gorman's** and **John Secor's** papers from the 1995 Charleston Conference. — KS*

The annual **Charleston Conference: Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition** held at the Lightsey Conference Center in Charleston, South Carolina was special in that the conference celebrated its fifteenth year and has grown to the point that concurrent educational sessions were employed. Approximately 500 librarians, publishers and vendors from all parts of the United States, Great Britain, Europe, and even Russia gathered to review the many issues surrounding our profession today.

The programs began with the first of three keynote address by **Laura Gasaway**, **UNC-CH School of Law** entitled "Copyright: What libraries and universities seek in the electronic environment." Ms. Gasaway outlined four major expectations librarians have for the information age including fair use, browsing capacity for electronic titles, increased capacity of interlibrary loans and the ability to create electronic reserves. Ms. Gasaway outlined how each has recently been challenged by governmental agencies who feel the need for a more restrictive informational environment. As an example, a clause within earlier green paper which supported the ability to search/browse electronic titles now has been deleted from the 9/15/95 white paper on "Intellectual Property and the National Information Infrastructure." Ms. Gasaway also indicated that such educational programs as distance learning, common in professional and college extension programs, is threatened by a recent recommendation that ownership of every transmission will remain with the holder of the copyright. Ms. Gasaway's greatest concern was that all statements concerning the public's rights have somehow disappeared from the earlier text and that in the white paper restrictive license agreements could adversely affect the concept of fair use for many years to come.

The next keynote address was presented

by **Michael Mellinger** of **Data Research Associates** of St. Louis and was entitled "Objects of Desire: Hype and Hope for Next-Generation Systems." Mr. Mellinger began with an amusing analysis of today's "buzzwords du jour" surrounding the information industry. In his discussion of the term "Z-neophobia" or "fear of the Z39.50 standard, the myths are that a) it's not finished, b) it doesn't work, and c) it's too complicated. In reality, no such system/standard is ever finished, tests on location indicate that the standard works and if it's complicated, so are libraries and information in general. With regard to the economics of the Web, Mr. Mellinger realizes that the complexion of the Net is changing and in fact, we are surfing on a rented board. Future development will evolve on the interoperability between systems and the growing interdependency of libraries to one another. Mr. Mellinger indicated we desperately need new paradigms for resource-sharing, organization of the Web and a greater role for libraries in the development of institutional systems. Mr. Mellinger advised us not to be "bulldozed by our institutional computer centers" but to get more involved in such decision-making.

The third keynote address was delivered by **Lisa Freeman** of the **University of Minnesota Press**. Tracing the history and traditional role university presses have played in the transmission of scholarly information, Ms. Freeman outlined the rather dismal outlook many university presses face, including the leveling and deduction of traditional university support, and the increasing centralization of commercial book vending. As a result, most university presses find themselves becoming more commercial, more committed to desktop publishing, more concerned with the marketability of potential titles often resulting in strained relations with their own university faculty. Citing the commonly held myth that electronic publishing will be cheaper, faster and better for scholarly information, Ms. Freeman stated that most work associated with a text is during the pre-publication stage. She added that shifting the responsibility of editing and production to the author results in lessened quality control and reduces the traditional role of peer review and interdisciplinary scholarship. Being forced to focus on more commercial titles also threatens the non-profit status of the university press.

After a general discussion session, attendees adjourned to separate meeting rooms for "lively lunches." Lively lunches are 90-minute discussions and presentations. Topics this first

day included — **International Resource Sharing and Networking, Approval Plan Core Lists, and Outsourcing.**

Following lunch, the attendees regrouped for a **CEO panel** discussion entitled "Takeovers, Mergers, Acquisitions and Failures: Can you buy your way to the future?" CEOs included **Bryan Ingleby** of Dawson, **Jane Burke** of Endeavor, **Ward Shaw** of CARL and management consultant **Gerald Garbacz**. This part of the program took the form of a question-and-answer session and first centered on the question of reactions to the trend toward the merging of the companies. All CEOs felt the trend would increase as would problems and occasional failures. Mr. Garbacz indicated that most acquisitions of this kind fail because the company is looking for a quick economic or organizational fix. They succeed when the acquisition fills a specific niche and is part of an overall strategy for growth. Ms. Burke also indicated that the successful merging of corporate cultures is another key element to a successful corporate acquisition. She cited the cultural difficulties posed when trying to work with the new emerging cultures of Eastern Europe. After a lively discussion, CEOs discussed the business climate and culture after a merger. After a break, a second **CEO Panel** included **Mike Markwith** (Swets), **Dan Tonkery** (Readmore), **Frans von Eysinga** (Wolters Kluwer), **Jim Ulsamer** (Baker & Taylor), and **Fred Philipp** (Blackwell North America). At 5PM, the conference officially ended and many conferees attended a **15th Birthday Celebration** for the Charleston Conference at the Charleston Visitor Center.

Friday's program commenced with presentations on document delivery by **Chuck Hamaker** of LSU and on future trends in acquisitions and collection development by **Tony Ferguson** of Columbia University. At this point, the conference broke up into **simulation sessions** on topics as diverse as **Project Muse**, **Acqweb** and **Acqnet**, **E.D.I.**, and **RoweCom Subscribe 96**. After reconvening, **John Secor** of **Yankee Book Peddler** provided a concise look at "Why some vendors will endure and some will not." Noting the steady decline in new library vendor start-ups, Mr. Secor, cited the long-term decline in library budgets, the lowering of publisher discounts to vendors, and the corresponding demand by libraries for greater discounts and services from the vendors. He feels that the future environment will see vendors unbundling their current service packages toward a

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charge for each service environment. Libraries must be willing to pay for value-added services. Mr. Secor feels that we will witness the demise of several major booksellers and an increase in strategic alliances between those remaining, adding that "failure starts at the top" when "we fail to develop a workable vision for the future." Mr. Secor advised library managers to develop similar visions for their own growth. In the question and answer session, Mr. Secor's thoughts were echoed by the audience that many libraries have also suffered from a lack of leadership and vision. Like vendors, libraries, too, need to develop realistic management goals and strategies for their implementation.

Friday's lively lunches centered around the topics such as **Exchange Rates, Approval Plan Core Lists, Prompt Cat/PromptSelect** and a report on **CD ROM Sales** by Norman Desmarais of Providence College in Rhode Island. Mr. Desmarais cited several industry studies of the commercial CD-ROM market which indicate the number of titles available are not an indicator of market success. To illustrate, of the approximately ten thousand CD titles currently available, only 111 of those titles actually made a profit last year. With an estimated three thousand new CD titles coming out each year, the competition between producers is great. Despite these statistics for commercial titles, professional CD titles sales topped 1.8 billion in 1994. Problems with CD titles include no effective method of monitoring usage, slow development of high density disks and the slow response time of network CDs. Mr. Desmarais feels that regardless of the problematic, the CD-ROM industry will consolidate, downsize, and further standardize its product. He looks to its future with guarded optimism.

During the afternoon, concurrent programs focused on such diverse topics as **multicultural acquisitions, setting up a homepage, weeding, and selection and evaluation of electronic resources**. During the last hour of the day further sessions focused on **buying out-of-print materials, faculty liaisons in the electronic age and organizational problems with Internet resources**. The day concluded with the traditional reception held at Charleston's historic **Old Exchange Building** and included tours of the 18th-century dungeon located in the basement.

Saturday's activities commenced at 7:45 AM with the **"Hyde Park Corner Breakfast"** an open forum discussion of diverse topics of interest. Much of this Saturday's discussion revolved around **problems with CD-ROM interfaces and Internet connectivity** and the overall **marketing** of these products. During the first two formal presentations **Tom Leonhardt** (U. of Oklahoma) and **Jack Walsdorf** (BNAM) gave sentimental, but historical accounts of their adventures in the book industry and book collecting in general.

After a **publisher's panel on the future of scientific publishing**, the attendees were

entertained, inspired, or annoyed (depending on their own opinions) by **Michael Gorman** of California State University and author of **Future Libraries**. Mr. Gorman expressed concern that the "flight into the all digital future is not well conceived." Reminding the audience that "the people of the future will know only that which we preserve," Mr. Gorman speculated that "the saddest person in the 21st century may be the historian," given our current crisis in archival preservation and the myth that mass digitization of resources will solve the current needs. Mr. Gorman stated that we need to move away from what he terms "bumper-sticker thinking" which fosters catch phrases such as "access, not ownership" in place of critical thinking and review, ignoring the fact that the best way to provide access is through ownership. Mr. Gorman outlined that evangelists for the Net attempt to sell us the myth of access to and preservation of all materials, the reality is that if we are to provide informed access to this resource, we will perform a form of informational triage, selecting what is most useful and of highest quality to our patrons. The specter of unenforceable copyright laws in the electronic environment will eventually lead to an unwillingness of the writer to produce what cannot be protected. We must move from the idea that all that matters to patrons is information, as such thinking can only lead to a post-literate society, intoxicated with an electronic Tower of Babel and easily manipulated by those that control it.

This thought was echoed by the next presenter **Clifford Lynch** who asserted that a library is more than a collection of data connected by search links. He likened the current attempt to call a group of URLs a library to collecting every bit of printed information produced by our society in a year (including restaurant menus, posters, and other ephemeral materials) and calling it a library. As URLs and sites go unmaintained, a form of "link rot" will settle in. One could witness this phenomena already when visiting a site that's no longer at that location or hasn't been maintained in several months. Mr. Lynch feels that the Net will become a part of the raw data from which the new library will be formed, searching must become more refined so as to provide a deeper, better quality of information to the patrons. Mr. Lynch indicated "there is something drastically wrong" with our current generation of search links like Web Crawler that find links and process information through some indexing mechanism. Such tools operate as if the entire universe of information is just out there for the scanning. We have produced an information-rich environment with too much relevant information. Consequently, this environment will necessitate the development of new levels of quality review due to the very basic limits of a human's attention span and time to wade through this universe of knowledge. Mr. Lynch posed the question of how do we integrate such quality assessment into our information retrieval systems as currently in our enthusiasm to promote the Net we have forsaken the message for the medium. Mr.

Lynch asserts that people will demand better indexing, organization, and quality control of Internet resources, and that these factors will dictate the future of the Internet. Whether or not everyone agreed with Mr. Gorman and Lynch, they were both entertaining and provided a welcome balance to the current climate of the almost religious evangelism of the Internet.

The **Charleston Conference** concluded with a final open forum on copyright and fair use. For many attendees, the yearly Charleston Conference provides a comfortable atmosphere for expanding one's knowledge base, for meeting with and learning from other professionals in our business. As one first-time conferee remarked, "it's so nice to be around a group of people who are interested in the same things you are." With its emphasis on a practical educational experience in an open egalitarian forum, the **Charleston Conference** will remain a valuable resource for Acquisitions, Serials, and Collection Development librarians, for many years to come.

University of Oklahoma Libraries Conference, March, 1995, Norman, Oklahoma

Report by **Linda K. Lewis**
(U. of New Mexico)

The theme of the conference, held in Norman, Oklahoma, was "Emerging Patterns of Collection Development in Expanding Resource Sharing, Electronic Information and Network Environments." The word that resonated through the presentations was "partnership"; the issues are too complex and too interrelated for any library to resolve alone, so we must all seek new partnerships and strengthen existing ones in order to thrive — or even survive.

Harold Billings, **University of Texas at Austin**, spoke of the role of librarians in managing information and shaping their local collections. Resource sharing is not a new topic, but is becoming more necessary as information expands and funding remains stable. Just as the health care field has moved into managed care, the information field may also move into managed collecting, with organized programs such as the **ARL Foreign Acquisitions Program** that divides responsibility for collecting by geographic areas. The expansion of electronic resources only adds to the need for cooperative approaches and for the definitions of what must be collected locally.

Genevieve Owens, **Bucknell University**, used a case study of **American Express** to suggest possible steps for libraries. American Express had been a traditional company, relying on its image to maintain its earnings. In the face of intense competition from credit cards, which created innovative links with other companies, expanded the services available, and targeted segments of the market, American Express saw its market share drop dramatically. Although libraries may not be

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losing clients yet, as American Express did, this is a time of transition, and the lessons and eventual reactions of American Express may be relevant. Libraries must recognize the need to meet the challenges and competition of new technologies. Owens suggested that libraries must focus on our users to determine what approaches and services would be most effective. American Express followed others into "co-branding," becoming partners with other companies such as airlines or hotels; they began offering new services; and they began targeting specific services to special customers. In selecting partners, it's crucial to pick partners carefully so that both benefit and the needs are complimentary. In offering new services, such as Bucknell's new interactive multimedia CD-ROM collection, you must balance the risks with the benefits. The ability to target services depends on the library's ability to gather and manipulate data; not all systems have sufficient capability in this area, but libraries should encourage vendors to develop increasingly flexible reporting abilities.

Chuck Hamaker, of Louisiana State University, tossed out Mardi Gras beads to the audience, and then spoke about LSU's cancellation and document delivery efforts. They asked the science/engineering/agriculture faculty to list the titles needed on site and the titles for which table-of-contents access with 24-hour document delivery was sufficient. The library had about 2/3s of the titles listed by faculty, but didn't have the other 1/3. The library now knows which faculty members consider which titles important; about 44% of their titles are important to only one faculty member; should that individual leave, the library can re-evaluate the subscription to the title. For the journals wanted by the faculty but not owned by the library, over 20% would be acceptable with table-of-contents access and document delivery, and those 20% turned out to be the more expensive titles. The faculty also identified some journals that were already owned by the library as ones where document delivery would be fine. The library promised free document delivery for faculty and graduate students for the titles canceled. They have canceled over \$600,000 since 1993. In 1994, they asked the faculty to review collections as part of an overall restructuring rather than a cancellation project, in order to support university priorities. They didn't plan for a cancellation for 1995, but continued to identify some titles as they evaluated collections, so did some cancellations and reallocated funds. It has been a very intensive and time-consuming effort for selectors, and has increased liaison and communication between the library and the departments. The library demonstrated the **Reveal** service from CARL to departments. They set up **unmediated document delivery service**, paid for by the library, for faculty and graduate students, via CARL. This service is managed through their interlibrary loan section; they have not had to add staff there. They had very few complaints, with about a 2% error rate from CARL. In

1994/5, they ordered 2,092 articles from 936 journals, for about \$28,000. Of those journals, only about 20 were requested more than 10 times each. It has meant a change in attitudes, and a redefinition of where they are building archival collections. The purpose is service, and an complete run of an unused journal doesn't serve their patrons. The library now has about 8,500 paid subscriptions, a drop from about 12,000, and purchase about 15,000 to 20,000 books, and they feel they are meeting the research needs of a very active faculty. Hamaker stressed that librarians must have hard facts of costs and delivery alternatives when talking with faculty. In addition to looking at requests of specific faculty, libraries must look at the interdisciplinary and multi-departmental interests that are sometimes missed in traditional reviews by department. Their experience at LSU is in the sciences; it might not work as well in other areas, depending on the availability of electronic indexing and document delivery. On the other hand, if the science areas, which are the most expensive, can be brought under control, the other areas might be less problematic to deal with. Libraries can no longer ignore the issues of cost-effectiveness.

Kit Kennedy, of Readmore Academic Services, spoke of partnerships between libraries and vendors, in a talk that included references to **John Donne** (as the father of resource sharing: "no man is an island..."), nesting dolls, the Oakland Bay Bridge, and **Edith Piaf**. You must read this one when the proceedings are published, since I can't to justice to it. Partnerships, which may take many forms, are crucial for libraries and vendors; those that satisfy the needs of both partners will thrive. It is a delicate balance, but worth pursuing.

Tony Ferguson, of Columbia University, described their use of periodicals price histories to make subscription and cancellation decisions. He categorized periodicals as friendly, i.e., those whose price increases aren't far greater than the increases of the institutional budget, and unfriendly or predatory, i.e., those with increases far higher than that of the institutional budget or national inflation rates. Libraries should look for periodicals that meet the needs of their users, are of high quality, are reasonably priced, and have a history of reasonable price increases. They should avoid periodicals with a history of outrageous price increases. The predatory journals take more and more funds, forcing libraries into canceling other titles and preventing libraries from adding newer titles. Columbia used vendor statistics covering 5 years of price histories. They excluded reference titles, then did a sampling of titles in five price groupings. They did find that nearly 2/3s of the titles had increased at a rate equal to or lower than the rate Columbia's budget had grown, but that the other predator journals showed nearly a 200% mean increase. They found that the social sciences were even more predatory than the sciences, perhaps catching up with earlier science increases. The science journals may cost more, but the social science increases are as high or higher. They did not find significant

differences between foreign and domestic publishers in the number of friendly or unfriendly journals. They did find that most predatory journals are published by commercial publishers. Ferguson recommended his rule of 5: (1) Look back at the pricing history when considering subscriptions; (2) Look at specific titles, not at categories of publishers or even at a specific publisher; (3) Involve the faculty; tell them about the worst cases and tell them about document delivery options for those titles; (4) Tell the editors and the publishers that you are canceling, or not subscribing, because of their pricing history. And tell them that you are subscribing in part because their pricing history has been reasonable; (5) Cancel loudly; let the faculty, the library committee, the editor, and the publishers know why. Currently the publishers, vendors and libraries and intertwined, spiraling down together; all the games and accusations don't change the downward fall. Libraries must support the friendly periodicals and publishers, and work together in order to make any impact.

William Sittig, of the Library of Congress, spoke about the role of the national libraries. Most have been collecting widely, often helped by legal deposit requirements, but budget problems have forced re-adjustments and re-allocations here as well. There is a growing emphasis on networking and on distributed responsibilities for collecting. Changes in government policies, such as charging for many items previously distributed free, add to the pressure for re-allocations. Some are exploring the digitization of their collections, with hopes for global networking; that raises the major problems of access, especially in less-developed areas. The Library of Congress faces these challenges. It has begun distributing responsibilities for collecting, co-operating with the **National Library of Medicine** and the **Agriculture library** to reduce duplication, and with **ARL's Foreign Acquisitions Program** to narrow the collecting areas. They are reducing serials holdings by cutting duplicates, reducing foreign subscriptions, and getting only one copy of titles also available electronically. They are seeking private funding for special collections. They are committed to digitization, such as the **American Memory Project**, in order to share resources.

Frederick Lynden, of Brown University, talked about whether the future of electronic information will actually result in resource sharing. There are futuristic visions of universal access to comprehensive data, but how do libraries maintain collections in the 20th century while re-tooling for the 21st century? Libraries are already out of money and space, with no hope of keeping up with inflation in the costs or amount of information. The future must include more electronic resources and more resource sharing. Electronic resources bring costs, of course, for the equipment, maintenance, staff time and training, and copyright fees in many cases. Resource sharing today may include: coordinated collection development; collaborative collection development; consortial cost sharing; cooperative holding agreements; consortial shar-

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ing of electronic resources; common interlibrary loan; cooperative or shared storage; cooperative education and expertise; common or linked online systems; and cooperative delivery systems. Real resource sharing means: that the requirements of the users are most often satisfied; that the materials are ready when the users need them; that the materials are readily available when the users are looking for them; that savings are realized; that costs are reduced; that resources are increased locally; that resources are shared nationally; that funds can be procured for the partners; that records are kept; and that the plan succeeds and remains in place. Resource sharing does seem to be increasing with the growth of technology and information, and partly due to increasing economic pressures. Shared values, shared commitment, and local political realities still determine success.

Although **Rebecca Lenzini** of **CARL UnCover** was unable to attend, her paper was presented by a colleague, **Ward Shaw**, president and founder of **CARL Systems, Inc.** The paper discussed some of the new players, or partners, in the world of collection development and access. In the past, librarians worked with publishers, serials vendors, book vendors, and online services handling citation databases. Now there are fulltext databases, created by companies or individuals; networked CD-ROMs; gateway access services; aggregated services aimed at the home users; individual publishers; individual authors; printers that handle multiple publishers, and probably others. The pricing methods vary widely as well, ranging from charges based on individual transactions to broader licensing agreements. The issues of copyright and royalties are huge. Collection development librarians are now working with many new players, and with many new issues; they must bring their knowledge and skills to the discussions and help shape libraries relationships within this new world.

The weather was cold, and the Oklahoma winds were indeed sweeping down. Over 100 people from about 50 libraries and companies heard and responded to the talks, sharing their opinions about very complex issues.

Born To Network: One Librarian's View of Network+Interop Las Vegas, April 2-4, 1996

Report by **C. Rebecca Garcia**
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I remember when I was in library school at UT Austin and I had a chance to attend my first ALA. I had such awe at the size of the exhibit hall and the technology I saw there. I couldn't believe the access to information that was available and I had never seen some of the stuff that was being shown everywhere. CD-ROMs, online automation systems, online

database services ... it was mind boggling. Plus there was all that great free stuff! I've grown somewhat jaded in the 12 or so years since that first ALA. Working for an automation vendor, I see the upcoming technology as it is being developed and at the show, I'm the one that smiles and gives out free stuff.

Well, I found another conference that inspires that old sense of wonder and awe. I just got back from **Network + Interop** in Las Vegas, Nevada and if you are at all interested in the new technology, networking or seeing the future of information access, you should have been there too. This conference is big. Really big. About 600 exhibitors and at least 30,000 attendees big. And networking professionals (or those simply interested in the new technologies) come from around the world to attend this conference.

I heard three keynote speakers: **Bill Gates**, CEO of **Microsoft Corporation**, **Bob Frankenberg**, CEO of **Novell, Inc.**, and **John Gerdelman**, President of **NetworkMCI Services** at **MCI Corp.** Of the three, John Gerdelman actually had the most visually exciting and well-practiced presentation. He spoke about the coming technology as he saw it and showed a video from the father of the Internet, **Vince Cerf**, who predicted that by the year 2000 there will be more users on the Internet than there are people in the world. The reason?

Machines of all types (your car, your fax machine, your printer, etc.) are going to be built with more and more computers inside of them and they will be using the Internet to hook up. Gerdelman sees the convergence of computer and telephone technology as a real growth area. Computer Telephony Integration (CT or CTI) was one of the most frequently touted new technologies on the exhibit floor (that's another thing — this show helps you learn bigger terms for everyday things like digital phone instructions).

One prime example of the use of computer telephony that **MCI** is deeply involved in is call centers that combine telephone instructions with computer databases and personal contacts with experts who can answer questions using sophisticated computer databases. Two examples are the new **1-800-MusicNow** service and the **Compaq** help line. Both services make use of telephone instructions and can terminate with a person at a call center who has simply been hired by that company to answer customer questions. These people are not employed by Compaq; they just answer questions for you about Compaq. Talk about outsourcing!

At this point, **Mr. Gerdelman** said that 80% of all 800- number calls terminate in one of these call centers. Another area that Mr. Gerdelman discussed in detail was **Information Centered Networks**, which are, as he put it, the next big thing. These actually tie in with **Intranets** as a network based on the principle of a network-based server as opposed to physical connections to specific servers each containing certain information. In an information centered network, files can be stored anywhere on a network and the user would not have to know where these files are in order to

access them. Using a specific file name (that, by the way, would not be the unintelligible string of letters and punctuation that are currently used as paths to files but instead would be mnemonically meaningful and easily typed), the user could access any file and never know where it resides on a network. We would move from a client/server model (a user's PC being the client and another designated CPU being the server) to a client/network model with the entire network being the user's domain.

Bob Frankenberg's speech centered on the **Novell** tag line of everything's connected. He talked a lot about client network computing and went head-to-head with the **Microsoft** announcement of its new foray into the email/messaging world with its **MS Exchange** software. **Frankenberg** announced an offer for those loyal **Novell Groupwise** clients who choose to ignore the blandishments of **MS**. One very interesting concept he mentioned was the big business of renting software applications online simply for use in opening/viewing/ utilizing an email message with an attachment from someone who runs a different software package than you might have. He also had a wonderful presentation of wireless connectivity with their mobile product and a wireless communication device.

Bill Gates' presentation was the one to see and be seen at, however. It was packed, as it always is when this billionaire speaks. For those of you interested in such things, **Gates** does seem to be dressing better since he has gotten married. As for his presentation, however, it was rather disappointing. The high point of the hour was when the product manager/engineer for the new **Exchange** integrated email/messaging server software got up and talked about what it was like building the thing and why it took them so long (six years). Information market, yet library budgets continue to shrink and the latest Internet search engine receives front page news and millions of dollars from investors. There is much work to be done to actively promote libraries and the true value that they contribute to a city, university or school.

On a lighter note, **Richard Lee**, cartoonist for **American Libraries**, shared his experiences and perspective on being a Librarian through his drawings and the perfectly timed delivery of a stand-up comic. He reminds us to find the humor in our work and laugh at ourselves. It is good therapy.

Elizabeth Martinez, Executive Director of **ALA**, joined the gathering to update the **NMLA** membership on the programs being initiated and defended on a National level in keeping with **ALA Goals 2000**. She introduced **Adam M. Eisgrau**, **ALA Washington Office, Legislative Council** to explain **ALA's** leadership role in challenging the **Communications Decency Act** of the **Telecommunications Act**, signed Feb. 8. by President Clinton. He also commented on **ALA's** involvement with the **Digital Future Coalition**, advocates for the public's interest in **Intellectual Property** issues. Organizers of the conference are to be congratulated for a well planned agenda offering a variety of topics of interest to public, school and academic **NMLA** members. 🌿